

# **DPH Announces Two Additional Flu-Related Deaths; Delawareans Should Follow Basic Tips to Stop Spread of Germs**

DOVER – As the number of confirmed influenza cases in Delaware continues to rise, the Division of Public Health (DPH) is announcing two recent flu-related deaths, bringing the total number of deaths for the 2019-2020 season thus far to four. The most recent victim is a 29-year-old New Castle County man diagnosed with influenza B who passed away this week. Additionally, last week, a 65-year-old New Castle County woman diagnosed with influenza A passed away due to complications from the flu.

Of the four individuals who have passed away this season, two persons were from Sussex County, and two were from New Castle County. None of the four individuals had received the flu vaccine and all had underlying medical conditions.

As of January 18, 2020, there have been 2,415 confirmed cases of influenza in Delaware, including 141 hospitalizations. These numbers reflect only the number of lab-confirmed cases; the actual number of cases circulating statewide is likely much higher.

“We can’t express enough sympathy for the friends and loved ones of those we have lost to flu this season,” said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. “The best protection against the flu is to get vaccinated every year. The vaccine is safe and effective for people six months and older. The vaccine makes you less likely to get the flu and will make your symptoms

milder in the event that you do catch it. You should also visit your doctor if you're feeling ill and take any antiviral medicine he or she prescribes as directed."

In addition to getting a flu vaccine and taking antiviral medication, DPH recommends everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If no tissue is available, cough or sneeze into your inner elbow.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Over-the-counter medicines can provide symptom relief, but if you suspect you have influenza, call your doctor as he or she may decide to provide antiviral medications to help hasten recovery and prevent serious complications. This is particularly important for those who feel very sick, are pregnant or have chronic medical conditions.

Flu symptoms come on suddenly, and include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, headaches and body aches, chills and fatigue. Some people get complications including pneumonia, bronchitis, and sinus and ear infections. People with pre-existing health conditions such as diabetes and asthma are more susceptible to catching the flu.

Flu vaccines are available at many pharmacies and grocery

stores, and through primary care physicians and some specialists. To find participating stores, enter your ZIP code in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's flu vaccine finder at [www.cdc.gov/flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/). For more information about the flu, visit [flu.delaware.gov/](http://flu.delaware.gov/) or call DPH at 1-800-282-8672. Flu shots are still available at DPH clinics located within the State Service Centers:

- Porter State Service Center, 509 W. Eighth St., Wilmington. For all ages 9 and up. Walk-ins are welcome Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Hudson State Service Center, 501 Ogletown Road, Newark. For all ages, including children age 6 months and older. Call 302-283-7587 (choose Option 2) to make an appointment Monday through Friday.
- Williams State Service Center, 805 River Road, Dover. For all ages, including children age 6 months and older. Call 302-857-5140 to make an appointment Monday through Thursday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Milford State Service Center – Riverwalk, 253 N.E. Front St., Milford. For ages 9 years and older. Mondays and Fridays. Walk-ins are accepted on Mondays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. By appointment only on Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Call 302-424-7130 to make an appointment.
- Anna C. Shipley State Service Center, 350 Virginia Ave., Seaford. For all ages, including children age 6 months and older. Walk-ins welcome Monday through Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- Adams State Service Center, 544 S. Bedford St., Georgetown. For all ages, including children age 6 months and older. Walk-ins welcome on Mondays only from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

*A person who is deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind or speech-disabled can call the DPH phone number above by using TTY*

services. Dial 7-1-1 or 800-232-5460 to type your conversation to a relay operator, who reads your conversation to a hearing person at DPH. The relay operator types the hearing person's spoken words back to the TTY user. To learn more about TTY availability in Delaware, visit <http://delawarerelay.com>.

The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations. DPH, a division of DHSS, urges Delawareans to make healthier choices with the 5-2-1 Almost None campaign: eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables each day, have no more than 2 hours of recreational screen time each day (includes TV, computer, gaming), get 1 or more hours of physical activity each day, and drink almost no sugary beverages.